

Victorian Studies Association of Ontario



May 2006

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The President's Message

My first year as the president of the Victorian Studies Association has flown by. It was an energetic and eventful year, with the participation of members continuing to be strong. And both our membership numbers and our finances have remained robust. So thank you all for your on-going support. The evening lectures from this past year were all very well received. I am especially grateful to Barbara Leckie for organizing an evening talk at Carleton University, and volunteering to organize another one for next year. Members from the University of Western Ontario – Anne Gagné and Corinne Davies are considering an especially innovative model that would combine a panel of speakers with one guest lecture. Abstracts of this past year's evening lectures can be found on our website at www.ryerson.ca/vsao. Preliminary work has already begun on next year's conference. In addition to repeating the components that made up the conference this year, we hope to recognize the fact that the conference will mark the VSAO's 40th anniversary. If you have any suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact me (denisoff@ryerson.ca). All the members who have contributed to organizing the past year's lectures, the conference, and the panel "Victorian Modernisms" that will be part of the ACCUTE conference at the end of the month deserve a huge thanks, as do those who gave talks at our conference and lectures. In closing, I personally want to thank volunteers who have helped with the newsletter, written articles, and worked on the website, including all the members of our executive: Alison Halsall (Secretary), David Latham (Past-President and Treasurer), Christine Bolus-Reichert (Member-at-Large), Anne Clendinning (Member-at-Large) and Stephen Heathorn (Member-

at-Large). It was a pleasure working with you all, and I look forward to another dynamic year.

All the best,
Dennis

Evening Speaker Plans for 2006-2007



"A Mad Tea-Party" (1864), John Tenniel

Last year's talks proved extremely popular with audiences averaging around 35 attendees. This upcoming year the VSAO will organize another series of evening talks. Members from Carleton University, Ryerson University, York University, and the University of Western Ontario have volunteered to arrange our four evening talks for the year. We will have speakers in London, Ottawa, and Toronto. The Association always encourages contributions from people whose areas of specialization are diverse and interdisciplinary.

Connie Crompton

Splendour in the Grass: The VSAO 2006 Spring Conference



On April 29, 2006, the Victorian Studies Association of Ontario held its annual one-day conference at Victoria College at the University of Toronto. The conference was an inspiring success. The day's papers were organized around the general topic of "Splendour in the Grass" and, as per tradition, the day proved bright and sunny with the new spring ivy giving an appropriately verdant warmth to the day.

Morning registration was followed by our opening panel, which featured four of our members. **Barbara Leckie** (Carleton University) spoke on "Splendour and Squalor: Housing for the Poor in Harriet Martineau, George Eliot, and Mary Ward." **D.M.R. Bentley** (University of Western Ontario) delivered a paper entitled "'A Glorious Field upon which to Work': Environmental Determinism in Post-Confederation Canadian Culture and Aesthetics."

Lisa Smith (University of Toronto) spoke on “The Other Side of Physiology: Desire and Knowledge in *The Lifted Veil*.” The session ended with **Barbara K. Seeber’s** (Brock University) discussion of “Women and Nature: Jane Austen’s ‘Catharine, or the Bower’.” All four papers explored nineteenth-century notions of nature, but related it to a variety of topics, including epistemologies of class, Canadian stylistics, scientific rationalism, and ecofeminism.

(continued after pictures)



Session chair Christine Bolus-Reichert shares the morning with panellists Barbara K. Seeber, Barbara Leckie, Lisa Smith, and D.M.R. Bentley



VSAO President Dennis Denisoff with our second keynote speaker, Joy Dixon

After a rousing luncheon and business meeting, we were pleased to welcome our first keynote speaker of the day, **Martin Danahay**. A member of the Department of English Language and Literature at Brock University, Martin delivered a talk on “John Ruskin’s Garden.”

Accompanied by fascinating reproductions of gardens that Ruskin had designed according to Dante’s *Inferno*, Martin employed Ruskin’s metaphor of digging turnips as paradigmatic of his determination to rethink Victorian ideologies of labour. Although this metaphor allowed Ruskin to question more traditional views of class and masculinity, Martin demonstrated that, with “In Queen’s Gardens,” he reverted to his conservative view of women as asexual and linked to the splendour of nature.

After a brief break, **Joy Dixon** from the History Department at the University of British Columbia delivered our second keynote lecture, “‘Love is a sacrament that should be taken kneeling’: Sexuality, Religion, and the Troubled History of ‘Secularization.’” In her presentation, Joy discussed the secularization of discourses relating to sexuality, with a special focus given to the public and private writing of George Cecil Ives.

Joy contrasted various theological and scientific conceptions of sexuality in the Victorian era in order to demonstrate the ways in which issues of desire relate to the failure of faith in the nineteenth century. As Joy demonstrated, Ives's agnostic Deism allowed him to locate a more liberated form of love that was separate from a distinctly Puritanical framework.

The conference concluded in highly civilized fashion with sherry and further animated discussion. Indeed, many participants were in no rush to leave. Eventually the patient staff at Burwash Hall nudged us out into the warm evening air.

The "Splendour in the Grass" conference was one of our best-attended functions to date, involving speakers, session chairs, and organizers from nine different Ontario institutions. This ability of the VSAO to bring Victorianists from across the province together proved one of the most splendid aspects of the day.

Many thanks to Morgan Holmes for his efforts in setting up the rooms and capturing the day on film. The VSAO Executive also thanks David Cook, Principal of Victoria College at the University of Toronto, and the Dean of Arts and Department of English at Ryerson University for their kind support of this event.



In this closing slide from Martin's keynote talk, we see him following Ruskin's advice!



Conversation and sherry flow during the closing hours of the conference.
Burwash Hall, Victoria College

Alison Halsall

Building our Archives

It's time to celebrate! This coming year marks the 40th anniversary of the Victorian Studies Association of Ontario, the second-longest running Victorianist society in the world. This is a wonderful achievement and we have much to be proud of in our decades of work in promoting the study of all things Victorian, and in maintaining an ongoing awareness of

Victorian history, science, and culture in Ontario itself. To commemorate this achievement, the VSAO Executive invites all of the association's members to contribute to the development of a record of its history on our website. Past-President David Latham is spearheading the first step in this endeavour by making the association's past newsletters available on-line. In addition, we aim to post a record of past conferences and evening lectures, as well as other events.

Please contact our secretary, Alison Halsall (ahalsall@yorku.ca), or me (denisoff@ryerson.ca; 416-979-5000, ext. 6135) with any information you have on past events. Photographs and suggestions for other materials that should be archived are especially welcome.

Dennis Denisoff

Panels of Interest to Victorianists at the Upcoming Congress

The panel "Victorian Modernisms" jointly organized by the VSAO and ACCUTE is scheduled for 27 May 2006, from 2:00-3:15 in Room SSB N105. Full details appear in the attached list.

Following is a summary of some of the panels at this year's Congress (York University, 27 May to 3 June 2006) that might be of interest to VSAO members. At this point in time, not all panels have been listed on the various web sites, so check the final program for the full listings. The panels mentioned here all focus primarily on Victorian studies, but there are Victorianist papers in other panels as well. To get a full sense of the diversity of offerings, check this website: www.confmanager.com.

Friday, May 26

4:00-5:30

CSHM

Medicine in Art and Literature

Room: TBA

Betty Bednarski (Dalhousie): "Jacques Ferron and the History of Medicine"

Mary Hunter (University College, London): "Vaccinating Bodies in Paris: Representations of Louis Pasteur and his 'patients'"

Vivian McAlister (Western Ontario): "A 150th Anniversary Review of Jerry Barrett's Painting 'The Queen's First Visit to Her Wounded Soldiers'"

4:00-5:30

CSHM

The Birthing Room

Room: TBA

Lianne McTavish (New Brunswick): "Narratives of Blame and Self-Preservation in the Early Modern French Birthing Room"

Catherine Braithwaite (McGill): "For the Care of the City's Destitute: Women, Health and

the University Lying-In Hospital, Montreal, 1843-1873”

Alison M. Nuttall (Edinburgh): “Birth in the City: The Edinburgh Royal Maternity Hospital and the Medicalisation of Childbirth in Edinburgh, 1844-1924”

Saturday, May 27

10:30-11:45

ACCUTE

Victorian Poetry

Room : SSB W133

Krista Lysack (Yale): “*Kept for the Master’s Use* : Frances Ridley Havergal and the Uses of Devotional Print”

Patricia Rigg (Acadia): “The Sonnet, Aestheticism, and the Poetic Transition from Victorianism to Modernism”

Wai Ying Lee (Toronto): “Urban Decadence and Fetishistic Escape: The Catholic Church in the Poetry of Ernest Dowson”

12:00-2:00

CLCG

Title TBA

Room: SSB S125

D.M.R. Bentley (Western): “Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s ‘Jealous’ God: ‘The Staff and Scrip’ and Related Pictures”

Sandra Hagan (Malaspina): “‘Take my lips’: Frances Ridley Havergal and the Pleasures of Hymnody for Victorian Single Women”

Sue Sorensen (Canadian Mennonite): “Keeping Silent in the Church: Cinematic and Literary Representations of Female Clergy”

2:00-3:15

ACCUTE

Nineteenth-Century Canadian Literature

Room : SSB S128

Derek Irwin (York): “Context of Cultures: Canadian English and Its Literary Roots”

Katja Thieme (British Columbia): “The Nineteenth-Century Debate on a National Canadian Literature as Situational Rhetoric”

2:00-3:15

VSAO/ACCUTE

Victorian Modernisms

Room: SSB N105

Nicola Spunt (York): “Figuring the Promises of Consumption in Christina Rossetti’s *Goblin Market* and James Joyce’s *Ulysses* ”

Stephen Ross (Victoria): “Séance on Shipboard: The Spiritualist Soul of Conrad’s Nigger”

Alison Halsall (York): “Modernist Haunted Houses: Pre-Raphaelite Spectres in H.D.’s *White Rose and the Red* ”

3:30-4:45

ACCUTE

Victorian Fiction

Room : SSB W136

Tyson Stolte (British Columbia): “‘An Earthy Flavour Throughout’: Materialist Psychology and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*”

Deanna Mason (Queen’s): “‘I was always reading’: Books, Reading, and Literacy in *Wuthering Heights*”

Lauren Gillingham (Ottawa): “Melodrama, Modernity, and Fashion in *Bleak House*”

Sunday, May 28

9:00-10:15

ACCUTE

George Eliot

Room: SSB W136

Rohan Maitzen (Dalhousie): “George Eliot: Moralism for the 21st Century”

J. Douglas Kneale (Western): “Hetty’s Hanky” Ann Gagne (Western): “The Silence that Speaks: Ellipsis as a Barrier in George Eliot”

10:45-12:15 p.m.

CSSR

Evil, Sacrament and Liberation

Room: RS130

Christopher J Irwin (Humber): “Radical Evil and Radical Responsibility: Theorizing the Problem of Evil through Kant and Levinas”

Donna Kerfoot (Toronto School of Theology, Wycliffe): “Caroline Fry: A Practical Theology of the Sacraments in the Nineteenth-Century Anglican Church”

Sarah Lynn Kleeb (University of Toronto): “Envisioning Emancipation: Karl Marx, Gustavo Gutiérrez, and the Project of Liberation”

2:00-3:15 p.m.

NAVSA/NASSR//ACCUTE

Nation and Migration I

Room : SSB W136

Robert Lapp (Mount Allison): “Galt’s *Bogle Corbet* : Biedermeier Emigré” Daniel Hannah (Leeds): “Transatlantic Passages: Ships and Transnational Narratives in the Nineteenth Century”

Jessica Howell (California, Davis): “Mrs. Seacole Prescribes Hybridity”

3:30-4:45 p.m.

NAVSA/NASSR/ACCUTE

Nation and Migration II

Room : SSB W136

Elizabeth Galway (Lethbridge): “Where Only the Strong Survive: Portrayals of the British Migrant in Canada in Nineteenth-Century Children’s Fiction”

Lucas Tromly (Manitoba): “Regional Nostalgia and *Fin de Siècle* Modernism: Oscar Wilde and the Postbellum South”

Monday, May 29

9:00-10:30

CHA

Vikings, Debutantes, and Cyclists: Women’s Evolving Gender Identities

Room: SSB N108

Elise Chenier (Simon Fraser): “[Coming Out”: Re-Inventing the Debutante in Early 20th-Century Montreal](#)”

Janice Liedl (Laurentian): “[Canadian Viking in the Governor-General’s Court: Medievalism in Pre-War Canada](#)”

Sheila Hanlon (York): “Cycleste in the City: Bicycling Women and the Use of Public Space in Late Victorian London”

Nancy Forestell (St. Francis Xavier): “Transnational Citizenship in a Post-Suffrage Era: Canadian First Wave Feminism, 1920-1939”

10:30-11:45

AASSC

Keynote Address

Room: Vari Hall D

Errol Durbach “Behind the Scenes of *Peer Gynt* : Ibsen’s Eclectic Theatricalism”

10:30-11:45 a.m.

IGA/ACCUTE

Gothic Addictions

Room: SSB S128

Patricia Comitini (Quinnipiac): “The Strange Case of Addiction in Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde*”

Kristina Aikens (Tufts): “Battling Addictions: Victorian Women, Opiates, and Dracula”

Jes Battis (Simon Fraser): “‘Willow Doesn’t Live Here Anymore’: Buffy and Occult Pharmography”

10:30-11:45

NAVSA/ACCUTE

Elizabeth Barrett Browning in Literary History

Room: SSB E115

Michele Martinez (Harvard): “Portraiture and Modernity in Barrett Browning’s *Aurora Leigh*”

Amy Criniti (Duquesne): “ ‘Study our manuscripts’: The Influence of John Donne on Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Sonnets from the Portuguese*”

Karen Manarin (Mount Royal): “The Brownings, Canon Formation and the North American Curriculum”

10:45 – 12:30

CHA

Montreal in the Nineteenth Century

Room: SSB N108

R.J. Morris (Edinburgh): "Conflict and Stability: a Comparison of Belfast and Montreal, 1780-1920"

Gillian I. Leitch (Montréal): "Voluntary Association Formation in Early 19th-Century Montreal"

Roderick MacLeod (Marionapolis): "Corpses, Public Space, and Family Values in Montreal, 1852-1875"

2:00-3:45

CHA

Aboriginal Settlements in the 18th and 19th Centuries

Room: SSB N105

Susan M. Hill (Wilfrid Laurier): "Skanatayonnih—One Village Has Been Made: The 19th Century Consolidation of the Six Nations Grand River Territory"

Robin Jarvis Brownlie (Manitoba): "Settlement, 'Indianness,' and Whiteness in Upper Canadian Discourses, 1820-1850"

Tuesday, May 30

10:30-11:45

VSAWC/ACCUTE

Victorian Undergrounds: Navigating the City

Room : SSB S126

Daniel Martin (Western Ontario): "Victorian Skylines and the Mechanics of Criminal Mobility: The Legend of Spring-Heeled Jack"

Treava Ann Kellington (Victoria): "Surveillance and the City in *Dracula* "

Mark A. McCutcheon (Guelph): "'This Artificial Underworld': The 'Underground' Chronotope in *The Time Machine* "

10:30-11:45

ACCUTE

Nineteenth-Century Canadian Poetry

Room : SSB N107

Daniela Janes (Toronto): "Labour's Champion: Poetry and Social Protest in Nineteenth-Century Canada"

Somaya Sabry (Western): "Kidd's Liminal Position between the Official and Vernacular Landscapes in *The Huron Chief*"

10:45-12:30

CHA

Sex and Which City? Probing the Range and Limits of Urban Subcultures and Communities in Lesbian/Gay History

Room: SSB N108

Lyle Dick (Parks Canada): "Male Homosexuality in Saskatchewan's Settlement Era: The 1895 Case of Regina's 'Oscar Wilde'"

Steven Maynard (Queen's): "Of Toronto the Gay: The 1880s and 1890s" Valerie Korinek (Saskatchewan) " 'Winnipeg: One Gay City!' Reconstructing a Gay and Lesbian Geography of Winnipeg"

Paul Jackson (McGill): "Voodoo, Urbanization and Homosexuality in Haiti"

12:00-2:00

CLSG

Title TBA

Room: SSB S123

Mervyn Nicholson (Thompson Rivers): "Unorthodox Lewis"

Greg Maillet (Atlantic Baptist): "The Aesthetics of Literary Conversion"

Monika Hilder (Trinity Western): "The 'Feminine' Face of Heroism: Gender Discourse in Classic and 19th Century Fairy Tales"

7:00-9:00

CSSR

Keynote

Room RN203

Donald Sewell Lopez, Jr. (Michigan): "From Kathmandu to Paris"

Wednesday, May 31

9:00-10:30

CHA

Urban Entertainments in the Nineteenth Century

Room: SSB W136

Julia Roberts (Wilfred Laurier at Brantford): "Food and Notions of the Exotic in Colonial Taverns"

Beverley Eadie (York): "Science, Spectacle and Fear: Mesmerism in Mid-19th -Century Britain"

Christopher Ernst (Toronto): "Public Entertainment and the City as Advertisement"

Ruth Knechtel